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ABSTRACT

This paper asserts that neither the cultural pluralist nor the assimilationist ideology can adequately guide curriculum reform, and advocates the adoption of a pluralist-assimilationist ideology. The pluralist-assimilationist assumes that while the ethnic group and the ethnic community are very important in the socialization of individuals, individuals are strongly influenced by the common culture during their early socialization, even if they never leave the ethnic community. The primary goal of the curriculum, according to this ideology, should be to help children learn how to function more effectively within their own ethnic culture, within the wider common culture, and within other ethnic communities. The pluralist-assimilationist also assumes that ethnic minorities do have some unique learning styles, although they share many learning characteristics with other children. It is held that curriculum reform must have several major goals: (1) to help individuals to clarify their ethnic identities and to function effectively within their own ethnic communities; (2) to discourage ethnic ethnocentrism; and (3) to help students to develop the ability to make reflective decisions so that they can resolve personal problems and undertake effective social action. Ethnic studies should be viewed as a process of curriculum reform. (Author/JM)

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CULTURAL PLURALISM: IMPLICATIONS FOR CURRICULUM REFORM*

By

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Several crucial questions concerning the relationship between the school and ethnicity arose during the 'Pluralism in a Democratic Society" conference which must be discussed and clarified before we can design sound curricular programs which relate to pluralism in America. One of these key questions relates to what should be the role of public institutions like the common school in the area of ethnicity. Should the common schools promote, remain neutral to, or ignore the ethnic characteristics of its students and the ethnic diversity within American life?

There was considerable agreement among the conference participants that the school should not ignore ethnicity and should play some kind of deliberate role in teaching students about issues related to ethnicity within American society. However, there was little agreement about the school's proper role, although many fruitful and provocative ideas were advanced regarding what the school should and should not do about issues related to ethnicity.

These views ranged from those of Michael Novak, who argued that ethnicity should be an integral part of the school curriculum, to those of Nathan Glazer, who cautioned that too much emphasis on ethnicity in the schools might be inimical to the common culture and promote the Balkanization of American society. Mari-Luci Jaramillo argued that the school should promote ethnic identity and attachments but should be primarily concerned with the "visible minorities" because of their urgent needs and unique problems. It is a question of priorities, argued Jaramillo. In his insightful paper, Apter pointed out that primordial and ethnic attachments persist in a modernized democratic state, and that primordialism and assimilation are competing forces.[1] Apter's analysis

suggests that the common schools cannot ignore ethnic attachments because they are integral parts of democratic societies.

I will identify two major ideological positions related to ethnicity and cultural pluralism which surfaced at the conference, in varying forms, and which are evident in most theoretical discussions on ethnicity and pluralism in the United States. The major assumptions and arguments of these positions will be discussed and their limitations as guides to curriculum reform will be identified. I will then describe an eclectic ideological position which reflects both major ideologies and present my recommendations for curriculum reform within that context.

It is very important for the reader to realize that the ideological positions that I will identify and describe are ideal types in the Weberian sense. The views of no particular writer or theorist can be accurately described by either of the two major positions in their ideal forms. However, various views on ethnicity and pluralism can be roughly classified using a continuum which has the two ideologies, in their ideal forms, at the extreme ends.

The two major positions are the cultural pluralist ideology and the assimilationist ideology. I am not the first observer to structure a typology related to ideologies and theories of pluralism in the United States. Gordon classifies theories of assimilation into three major categories: Anglo-conformity, the melting pot and cultural pluralism.[2] Higham also identifies three ideologies: integrationist, pluralist and pluralistic integrationist.[3] These two typologies as well as the one which I am presenting are in some ways similar but are different conceptualizations.

The Cultural Pluralist Ideology

The cultural pluralist ideology, in varying forms, is being widely articulated by writers today. Some writers, such as Charles V. Hamilton and Stokely Carmichael,[4] endorse a "strong" version of pluralism, while writers such as Michael Novak and Robert L. Williams endorse a much "weaker" form of cultural pluralism.[5] The pluralist makes various assumptions about the nature of American society, the function of the ethnic group in socializing the individual, and the responsibility which the individual member of a presumed oppressed ethnic group has to the "liberation struggle" of that group. The pluralist also makes certain assumptions about research, learning, teacher training and the proper goals of the school curriculum.

The pluralist argues that ethnicity and ethnic identities are very important in American society. The United States, according to the pluralist, is made up of competing ethnic groups, each of which champions its economic and political interests. It is extremely important, argues the pluralist, for the individual to develop a commitment to his or her ethnic group, especially if that ethnic group is "oppressed" by more powerful ethnic groups within American society. The energies and skills of each member of an ethnic group are needed to help in that group's liberation struggle. Each individual member of an ethnic group has a moral obligation to join the liberation struggle. Thus the pluralist stresses the rights of the ethnic group over the rights of the individual. The pluralist also assumes that an ethnic group can attain inclusion and full participation within a society only when it can bargain from a powerful position and when it has "closed ranks" within.[6]

The pluralist views the ethnic group as extremely important in the socialization of the individual within a highly modernized society. It is with in their own particular ethnic groups that individuals develop their languages, life-styles, and values, and experience important primary group relationships and attachments. The ethnic community also serves as a supportive environment for the individual and helps to protect him or her from the harshness and discrimination which he or she might experience in the wider society. The ethnic group thus provides the individual with a sense of identity and psychological support, both of which are extremely important within a highly modernized and technological society which is controlled primarily by one dominant ethnic group. The pluralist views the ethnic group as exceedingly important and believes that public institutions like the school should actively promote the interests of the various ethnic groups in its policies and in the curriculum.

The pluralist makes assumptions about research which differs from those made by the assimilationist. The pluralist assumes that ethnic minority cultures in the United States are not disadvantaged, deviant or deficient but are well ordered and highly structured but <u>different</u> from each other and from the dominant Anglo-American culture. Thus the pluralist uses a "culture difference" model when researching ethnic groups while the assimilationist researcher uses a deficit model or a genetic model.[7] Because of their different research assumptions, the cultural pluralist researcher and the assimilationist researcher frequently derive different and often conflicting research conclusions. Researchers such as Stephan and Joan Baratz, Jane R. Mercer, and Robert L. Williams have used the cultural difference model extensively in their research studies on

ethnic groups and have done a great deal to legitimize it within the social science and educational communities.[8]

The cultural pluralist also assumes that ethnic minorities have unique learning styles and that the school curriculum and teaching strategies should be revised so that they are more consistent with the cognitive and life styles of ethnic group students. Ramirez and Castañeda have written insightfully about the unique learning styles of Mexican American youths.[9] A recent study by Stodolsky and Lesser also supports the notion that the cognitive styles among ethnic groups sometimes differ.[10]

Pluralists, because of their assumptions about the importance of the ethnic group in the lives of children, believe that the curriculum should be drastically revised so that it will reflect the cognitive styles, cultural history, and present experiences and aspirations of ethnic groups, especially the "visible" minorities. The cultural pluralist believes that if the school curriculum was more consistent with the experiences of ethnic groups the learning and adjustment problems which minority students experience in the schools would be greatly reduced. Thus the cultural pluralist argues that learning materials should be culture-specific and that the major goal of the curriculum should be to help the child to function more successfully within his or her own ethnic culture. The curriculum should be structured so that it stresses events from the points of view of the specific ethnic groups. The curriculum should promote ethnic attachments and allegiances and help students to gain the skills and commitments which will enable them to help their ethnic group to gain power and to exercise it within the larger civic culture.

The Assimilationist Ideology

The assimilationist feels that the pluralist greatly exaggerates the extent of cultural differences within American society. However, the assimilationist does not deny that ethnic differences exist within American society or that ethnicity is very important to some groups. However, the assimilationist and the pluralist interpret ethnicity in the United States quite differently. The assimilationist tends to see ethnicity and ethnic attachments as fleeting and temporary within an increasingly modernized world. Ethnicity, argues the assimilationist, wanes or disappears under the impact of modernization and industrialization. The assimilationist believes that ethnicity is more important in developing societies than in highly modernized societies and that it crumbles under the forces of modernization and democratization. The assimilationist sees the modernized state as being universalistic rather than characterized by strong ethnic allegiances and attachments.[11]

Not only do the assimilationists view ethnicity as somewhat non-characteristic of modernized societies, they believe that strong ethnic attachments are rather dysfunctional within a modernized state. Assimilationists believe that the ethnic group promotes group rights over the rights of the individual, and that the individual must be freed of ethnic attachments in order to have choices within society. The assimilationist also views ethnicity as a force which is inimical to the goals of a democratic society. Ethnicity, argues the assimilationist, promotes divisions, exhumes ethnic conflicts, and leads to the Balkanization of society. The assimilationist sees integration as a

societal goal in a modernized state and not ethnic segregation and separatism.

The assimilationist believes that the best way to promote the goals of American society and to develop commitments to the ideals of American democracy is to promote the full socialization of all individuals and groups into the common culture. Every society, argues the assimilationist, has values, ideologies, and norms which each member of that society must develop commitments to if it is to function successfully and smoothly. In the United States, these values are embodied in the American Creed and in such documents as the United States Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. In each society there is also a set of common skills and abilities which every successful member of society should master. In our nation these include speaking and writing the English language.

The primary goal of the common school, like other publicly supported institutions, should be to socialize individuals into the common culture and enable them to function more successfully within it. At best, the school should take a position of "benign neutrality" in matters related to the ethnic attachments of its students.[11] If ethnicity and ethnic attachments are to be promoted, this should be done by private institutions like the church, the community club and the private school.

Like the cultural pluralist, the assimilationist makes assumptions about research related to minorities. Their conclusions reflect their assumptions. Assimilationists usually assume that subcultural groups which have characteristics that cause its members to function unsuccessfully in the common culture are deficient, deprived and pathological, and lack

needed functional characteristics. Researchers who embrace an assimilationist ideology usually use the genetic or the social pathology research model when studying ethnic minorities.[13]

The assimilationist learning theorist assumes that learning styles are rather universal across cultures (such as the stages of cognitive development identified by Piaget) and that certain socialization practices, such as those exemplified among middle class Anglo-Americans, enhance learning while other early socialization practices, such as those found within most lower class ethnic groups, retard the child's ability to conceptualize and to develop his or her verbal and cognitive abilities. Consequently, assimilationist learning theorists often recommend that ethnic minority youths from lower class homes enter compensatory educational programs at increasingly early ages. Some have suggested that these youths should be placed in a middle class educational environment shortly after birth.[14]

The assimilationist believes that curriculum materials and teaching styles should be related primarily to the common culture. Emphasis should be on our common civilization since all American citizens must learn to participate in a common culture which requires universal skills and competencies. Emphasis on cultural and ethnic differences might promote the Balkanization of our society and fail to promote socialization into the common civic culture. The school's primary mission within a democratic society should be to socialize youths into the civic culture of the United States.

The curriculum should stress the commonality of the heritage which all people share in this nation. This includes the great documents in American history such as the Declaration of Independence and events such as the American Revolution and the two great World Wars. The curriculum should also help the child to develop a commitment to the common culture and the skills to participate in social action designed to make the practices in this nation more consistent with our professed ideologies. The school should develop within youths a "critical acceptance" of the goals, assumptions, and possibilities of this nation.

Attacks on the Assimilationist Ideology

Historically, the assimilationist ideology has dominated American intellectual and social thought, as Glazer perceptively observes.[15] Social and public policy in American society has also been most heavily influenced by the assimilationist ideology. Historically, the schools and other American institutions have viewed the acculturation of the immigrants and their descendants as one of their major goals. The nativists and the Americanizers wanted to make the immigrants "good, law-abiding Americans."[16] Occasionally in American history a few voices in the wilderness have championed "cultural pluralism." However, their cries have usually fallen on deaf ears.

Around the turn of the century, when masses of Southern, Eastern and Central Europeans were immigrating to the United States and were being attacked by the American nativists, liberal philosophers and writers, usually of immigrant descent, strongly defended the immigrants and argued that their cultures could greatly enrich American civilization and that the

immigrants had a right to maintain their ethnic cultures in a democratic nation like the United States. These writers, which included Horace Kallen, Randolph Bourne, and Julius Drachsler, set forth the concept of cultural pluralism and used it to defend these immigrants and their right to have "cultural democracy" in the United States.[17] Kallen argued cogently that the cultures of the various immigrant groups would greatly strengthen American civilization. He viewed a society made up of diverse ethnic cultures as "an orchestration of mankind." Despite the passionate arguments and eloquence of philosophers like Kallen and Drachsler, their pleas largely fell on deaf ears and the assimilationists forces triumphed in the United States and were symbolized by the passage of the highly restrictive immigration act of 1924.

The Third World Rejects the Assimilationist Ideology

In the 1960s, Afro-Americans began a fight for their rights that was unprecedented in their history. Other non-white ethnic groups, who were made acutely aware of their ethnic status by the Black revolt, and encouraged by what they perceived as the benefits gained by Afro-Americans, also began to make unprecedented demands upon American civic and public institutions. These groups demanded more control of their communities, more ethnic teachers for their youths, and new interpretations of American history and culture which more accurately and sensitively described their experiences in the United States. Ethnic minority groups began to seriously question both the societal goals and the dominant ideology within American society.

The assimilationist ideology and the practices associated with it were strongly attacked by Third World intellectuals, researchers and social activists. The rejection of the assimilationist ideology by non-white intellectuals and leaders is historically very significant. This rejection represents a major break from tradition within ethnic groups, as Glazer observes.[18] Traditionally, most intellectuals and social activists among American minorities have supported assimilationist policies and regarded acculturation as a requisite for full societal participation. There have been a few staunch separatists among Afro-Americans and other ethnic groups throughout American history. However, these leaders have represented a cry in the wilderness. Significant, too, is the fact that many white liberal writers and researchers also began to attack the assimilationist ideology and the practices associated with it in the 1960s. This represented a major break from white liberal tradition. Some white liberal writers and researchers attacked the assimilationist ideology much more vigorously than did many Black intellectuals and writers. Some of the most passionate and perceptive advocates of the teaching and acceptance of Black English in the schools, for example, are liberal white researchers such as Joan Baratz, Roger Shuy and William Labov.[19]

Third World writers and researchers attacked the assimilationist ideology for many reasons. They saw it as a weapon of the oppressor that was designed to destroy the cultures of ethnic groups and to make their members personally ineffective and politically powerless. These writers also saw it as a racist ideology that justified damaging school and societal practices which victimized minority group children. Many minorities also lost faith in the assimilationist ideology because they had become very disillusioned with

what they perceived as its unfulfilled promises. The rise of ethnic awareness and ethnic pride also contributed to the rejection of the assimilationist ideology by many ethnic minorities in the 1960s. Many minority spokespersons and writers searched for an alternative ideology and endorsed some version of cultural pluralism. They viewed the pluralist ideology as much more consistent with the liberation of oppressed and stigmatized ethnic groups than the assimilationist ideology.

In recent years, "cultural pluralism" has come into vogue among curriculum specialist and is widely discussed and written about by educators. The pluralist ideology is verbally endorsed by many curriculum specialists in the schools, although many school people who verbally endorse cultural pluralism have not seriously examined all of the ramifications of the pluralist ideology and its full policy and curricular implications. The December, 1975 issue of Educational Leadership, a leading curriculum journal, was devoted to the implications of cultural pluralism for the curriculum. This special issue of the journal suggests the wide popularity of the concept among school people and curriculum specialists.

A Critique of the Pluralist and Assimilationist Ideologies

Although both the pluralist and assimilationist positions make some useful assumptions and set forth arguments which curriculum specialists need to seriously ponder as they attempt to revise the school curriculum, neither ideology, in its ideal form, is sufficient to guide the revision of the curriculum in the common schools. The pluralist ideology is useful because it informs us about the importance of ethnicity within our nation and the extent to which an individual's ethnic group determines his or her life

chances in American society. The assumptions which the pluralist makes about the nature of minority cultures, the learning styles of minority youths, and the importance of ethnic identity to many American children are also useful to the curriculum builder.

However, the pluralist exaggerates the extent of cultural pluralism within American society and fails to give adequate attention to the fact that gross cultural (if not structural) assimilation has taken place in American society. Gordon, who seriously questions the extent of cultural pluralism in American society writes, "Structural pluralism . . . is the major key to the understanding of the ethnic makeup of American society, while cultural pluralism is the minor one. . . ." [20] Exaggerating the extent of cultural differences between and among ethnic groups might be as detrimental for school policy as ignoring those which are real.

The pluralist also fails to give adequate attention to the fact that most members of ethnic groups participate in a wider and more universalistic culture than the ones in which they have their primary group attachments. Thus the pluralist appears unwilling to prepare youths to cope adequately with the "real world" beyond the ethnic community. The cultural pluralist has also not clarified, in any meaningful way, the kind of relationship that should exist between antagonistic and competing ethnic groups which have different allegiances and conflicting goals and commitments. In other words, the pluralist has not adequately conceptualized how a strongly pluralistic nation will maintain an essential degree of societal cohesion.

The assimilationist argues that the school within a common culture should socialize youths so that they will be effective participants within that culture and will develop commitments to its basic values, goals and

ideologies. The assimilationist also argues that the schools should help youths to attain the skills that will enable them to become effective and contributing members of the nation state in which they live. It is important for curriculum developers to realize that most societies expect the common schools to help socialize youths so that they will become productive members of the nation state and develop strong commitments to the idealized societal values. Curriculum developers should keep the broad societal goals in mind when they reform the curriculum for the common schools.

However, the assimilationist make a number of highly questionable assumptions and promote educational practices which often hinder the success of youths who are socialized within etnnic communities which have cultural characteristics quite different from those of the school. The assimilationist's assumption that learning styles are universalistic rather than to some extent culture-specific is questionable. The assumption that all children can learn equally well from teaching materials that only reflect the cultural experiences of the majority group is also questionable and possibly detrimental to those minority group children who have strong ethnic identities and attachments.

When assimilationists talk about the "common culture," most often they mean the Anglo-American culture and are ignoring the reality that the United States is made up of many different ethnic groups, each of which has some unique cultural characteristics that are a part of America. The curriculum builder should seriously examine the "common culture" concept and make sure that the view of the common American culture which is promoted in

the school is not racist, ethnocentric or exclusive, but is multiethnic and reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity within American society. We need to redefine what the common culture actually is and make sure that our new conceptualization reflects the social realities within this nation, and that it is not a mythical and idealized view of American life and culture.

The Pluralist-Assimilationist Ideology

Since neither the cultural pluralist nor the assimilationist ideology can adequately guide curriculum reform within the common schools, we need a different ideology which reflects both of these positions and yet avoids their extremes. We also need an ideology which is more consistent with the realities in American society. We might call this position the pluralist-assimilationist ideology and imagine that it is found near the center of our continuum, which has the cultural pluralist and the assimilationist ideologies at the extreme ends. (See Figure 1)

The pluralist-assimilationist ideology has not historically been a dominant ideology in American society. However, the experiences of some ethnic groups in America, the Orthodox Jews being the most salient example, are highly consistent with the pluralist-assimilationist's vision of society. Although the pluralist-assimilationist ideology is less theoretically developed than the other two positions, the pluralist-assimilationist, like the other ideologists, makes a number of assumptions about the nature of American society, what the goals of our nation should be, and about research, learning, teacher training and the school curriculum.

The pluralist-assimilationist feels that the cultural pluralist exaggerates the importance of the ethnic group in the socialization of the

individual and that the assimilationist greatly understates the role of ethnic groups in American life and in the lives of individuals. Thus the pluralist-assimilationist believes that both the pluralist and the assimilationist have distorted views of the realities in American society. The pluralist-assimilationist assumes that while the ethnic group and the ethnic community are very important in the socialization of individuals, individuals are strongly influenced by the common culture during their early socialization, even if they never leave the ethnic community or enclave. The common American culture influences every member of society through such institutions as the school, the mass media, the courts, and the technology which most Americans share. Thus, concludes the pluralist-assimilationist, while ethnic groups have some unique cultural characteristics, all groups in America share many cultural traits. As more and more members of ethnic groups become upward mobile, ethnic group characteristics become less important but do not disappear. Many ethnic group members that are culturally quite assimilated still maintain separate ethnic institutions and symbols.[21]

The pluralist-assimilationist sees neither separatism (as the pluralist does) nor total integration (as the assimilationist does) as ideal societal goals, but rather envisions an "open society" in which individuals from diverse ethnic, cultural, and social class groups have equal opportunities to function and participate. In an "open society," individuals can take full advantage of the opportunities and rewards within all social, economic, and political institutions without regard to their ancestry or ethnic identity.[22] They can also participate fully in the society while preserving their distinct ethnic and cultural traits, and are able to "make the maximum

number of voluntary contacts with others without regard to qualifications of ancestry, sex, or class." [23]

In the multiethnic, open society envisioned by the pluralist-assimilationist, individuals would be free to maintain their ethnic identities. They would also be able and willing to function effectively within the common culture and within and across other ethnic cultures. Individuals would be free to act in ways consistent with the norms and values of their ethnic groups as long as they did not conflict with dominant American idealized values, such as justice, equality of opportunity, and respect for human life. All members of society would be required to conform to the American Creed values. These values would be the unifying elments of the culture that would maintain and promote societal cohesion.

Because of their perceptions of the nature of American society and their vision of the ideal society, pluralist-assimilationists believe that the primary goal of the curriculum should be to help children learn how to function more effectively within their own ethnic culture, within the wider common culture, and within other ethnic communities. However, pluralist-assimilationists feel strongly that during the process of education the school should not alienate children from their ethnic attachments but help them to clarify their ethnic identities and make them aware of other ethnic and cultural alternatives.

The pluralist-assimilationist believes that the curriculum should reflect the cultures of various ethnic groups and the common culture. Students need to study all of these cultures in order to become effective participants and decision-makers in a democratic society. The school curriculum should respect the ethnicity of the child and make use of it in

positive ways. However, the students should be given options regarding their political choices and the actions which they take regarding their ethnic attachments. The school should not "force" students to be and feel ethni if they choose to free themselves of ethnic attachments and allegiances.

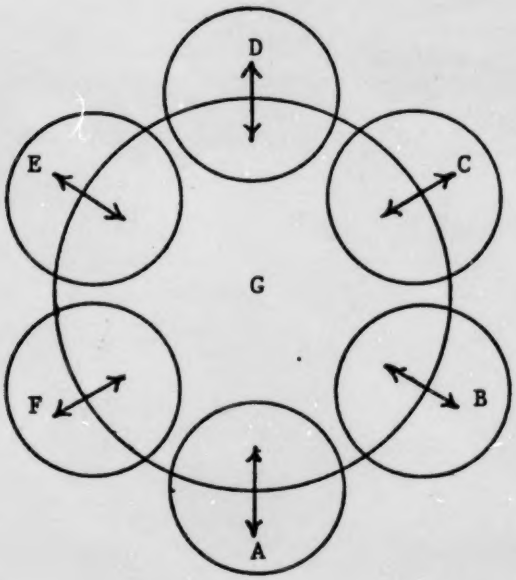
The pluralist-assimilationist also assumes that ethnic minorities do have some unique learning styles, although they share many learning characteristics with other children. Educators should be knowledgeable about the aspects of their learning styles which are unique so that they can better help minorities to attain more success within the school and in the larger society.

While the pluralist-assimilationist ideology can best guide curriculum reform and school policy, difficult questions regarding the relationship of the school and the child's ethnic culture are inherent within this position. The pluralistic-assimilationist argues, for example, that the school should reflect both the child's ethnic culture and the common societal culture. These questions emerge: How does the individual function within two cultures which sometimes have contradictory and conflicting norms, values and expectations? What happens when the ethnic cultures of the students seriously conflict with the goals and norms of public institutions like the school? Do the institutions change their goals? If so, what goals do they embrace? The assimilationist solves this problem by arguing that the child should change to conform to the expectations and norms of public institutions.

Although I support the pluralist-assimilationist position and will present my proposals for curriculum reform within that ideological frame-

Figure 2

The Sociocultural Environment of Ethnic Youths



The ethnic minority youth functions within two socio-ethnic environments, that of his or her ethnic subsociety and that of the dominant ethnic group, Anglo-Americans. The circles labeled A through F represent ethnic minority subsocieties. The circle labeled G represents the dominant ethnic society. The school should help ethnic minority children to learn to function successfully within their own ethnic subsociety, other ethnic subsocieties, and the dominant ethnic society. It should help Anglo-Americans to learn to function in all of these ethnic subsocieties and present them with cultural and ethnic alternatives.

work, it is very difficult to satisfactorily resolve all of the difficult questions inherent within this ideology. However, public institutions like the school can and should "allow" ethnic groups members to practice their culture specific behaviors as long as they do not conflict with the major goals of the school. One of the school's major goals is to teach children how to read, to write, to compute and to think. The school obviously cannot encourage "ethnic" behavior if it prohibits children from reading. On the other hand, some children might be able to learn to read more easily from Graciela than from Dick and Jane.

The Goals of Curriculum Reform

To help students learn how to function effectively within and across various cultures, curriculum reform must have several major goals. One of these goals should be to help individuals to clarify their ethnic identities and to function effectively within their own ethnic communities. An individual must clarify his or her own sense of ethnic and personal identity before he or she can positively relate to individuals who belong to other ethnic and racial groups. We need to foster the development of self-acceptance but discourage ethnic ethnocentrism. Although individuals within a pluralistic society must learn to accept their own ethnic identity and to become comfortable with it, they must also learn to function effectively within other ethnic cultures and to respond positively to individuals who belong to other ethnic groups (See Figure 2). They also need to learn how to interact with members of outside groups and how to resolve conflicts with them.

Both of the above goals are equally significant within a pluralistic nation. The attainment of one is not likely to occur unless both are realized and fostered. It is extremely difficult for a Mexican-American child to accept his or her cultural heritage if it is demeaned by "significant others" in institutions like the school. It is also very difficult for Anglo-Americans to learn to respond to non-whites positively and sensitively if they are unaware of the perceptions of their culture that are held by other ethnic groups and of the ways in which the dominant culture evolved and attained the power to shape the United States in its image.

We have never fully realized the positive effects which can occur from the diverse nature of our society because the major goal of most social institutions, historically, has been to Anglicize ethnic groups, to disregard their ethnic cultures, and to foster a monocultural societal ideal. The result has been that almost every ethnic group has struggled to become culturally like Anglo-Americans. Those groups which have been the most successful have attained the highest levels of social and economic mobility. The ethnic groups in our society that are the most "ethnic" tend to be heavily concentrated in the lower and working classes. Because most of the institutions within our society tend to foster and to idealize Anglo-Saxon cultural characteristics and do not encourage Anglo-Americans to function in other ethnic cultures, Anglo-Americans are rarely required to function within other ethnic communities. Members of other ethnic groups tend to reject their ethnic cultures and to strive to attain Anglo-American cultural traits. However, this is less true today than in the

past. Ethnic diversity and biculturalism will not become ideals in our society until members of the dominant ethnic group and of other ethnic groups better understand their own cultures and learn to function within and across cultures.

A reformed curriculum should also help students to develop the ability to make reflective decisions so that they can resolve personal problems, and through social action, influence public policy and develop a sense of political efficacy.[24] In many ethnic studies units and lessons, emphasis is on the memorization and testing of isolated historical facts about shadowy ethnic heroes and events of questionable historical significance. In these types of programs ethnic studies is merely an extension of the regular history or social studies program.

Curriculum reform should have goals which are more consistent with the needs of a global society. Events within the last decade have dramatically indicated that we live in a world society that is beset with momentous social and human problems, many of which are related to ethnic hostility and conflict. Effective solutions to these tremendous problems can be found only by an active, compassionate, and informed citizenry capable of making sound public decisions that will benefit the world community. It is imperative that the school, and the social studies in particular, play a decisive role in educating citizens who have both the vision and the courage to make our world more humane.

Ethnic Studies: A Process of Curriculum Reform

To help students learn how to function more effectively within various ethnic cultures and within the common culture, ethnic studies should be viewed as a process of curriculum reform that will result in the creation of a new curriculum that is based on new assumptions and new perspectives, and which will help students to gain novel views of the American experiences and a new conception of what it means to be American. Since the English immigrants gained control over most economic, social and political institutions early in our national history, to Americanize has been interpreted to mean to Anglicize. Especially during the height of nativism in the late 1800s and the early 1900s, the English-Americans defined Americanization as Anglicization.[25] This notion of Americanization is still widespread within our society and schools today. Thus when we think of American history and American literature we tend to think of Anglo-American history and literature written by Anglo-American authors.

Reconceptualizing American Society

Since the assumption that only that which is Anglo-American is American is so deeply ingrained in curriculum materials and in the hearts and minds of many students and teachers, we cannot significantly change the curriculum by merely adding a unit or a lesson here and there about Afro-American, Jewish-American, or Italian-American history. Rather, we need to seriously examine the conception of American that is perpetuated in the curriculum and the basic purposes and assumptions of the curriculum.

It is imperative that we totally reconceptualize the ways in which we view American society and history in the school curriculum. We should teach

American history from diverse ethnic perspectives rather than primarily or exclusively from the points of view of Anglo-American historians and writers. Most American history courses are currently taught primarily from an Anglo-American perspective. These types of courses and experiences are based on what I call the Anglo-American Centric Model or Model A (See Figure 3). Ethnic studies, as a process of curriculum reform, can and often does proceed from Model A to Model B, the Ethnic Additive Model. In courses and experiences based on Model B, ethnic content is an additive to the major curriculum thrust, which remains Anglo-American dominated. Many school districts that have attempted ethnic modification of the curriculum have implemented Model B types of curriculum changes. Black Studies courses, Chicano Studies courses, and special units on ethnic groups in the elementary grades are examples of Model B types of curricular experiences.

However, I am suggesting that curriculum reform proceed directly from Model A to Model C, the Multiethnic Model. In courses and experiences based on Model C, the students study historical and social events from several ethnic points of view. Anglo-American perspectives are only one group of several and are in no way superior or inferior to other ethnic perspectives. I view Model D (the Multinational Model) types of courses and programs as the ultimate goal of curriculum reform. In this curriculum model, students study historical and social events from multinational perspectives and points of view. Since we live in a global society, students need to learn how to become effective citizens of the world community. This is unlikely to happen if they study historical and contemporary social events only from the perspectives of ethnic cultures within this nation.

Teaching Multiethnic Perspectives

When studying a historical period, such as the Colonial period, in a course organized on the Multiethnic Model (Model C), the inquiry would not end when the students viewed the period from the perspectives of Anglo-American historians and writers. Rather, they would ponder these kinds of questions: Why did Anglo-American historians name the English immigrants "Colonists" and other nationality groups "immigrants?" How do Native American historians view the Colonial period? Do their views of the period differ in any substantial ways from the views of Anglo-American historians? Why or why not? What was life like for the Jews, Blacks and other ethnic groups in America during the 17th and 18th centuries? How do we know? In other words, in courses and programs organized on Model C, students would view historical and contemporary events from the perspectives of different ethnic and racial groups.

I am not suggesting that we eliminate or denigrate Anglo-American history or Anglo-American perspectives on historical events. I am merely suggesting that Anglo-American perspectives should be among many different ethnic perspectives taught in the social studies and in American history. Only by approaching the study of American history in this way will students get a global rather than an ethnocentric view of our nation's history and culture.

A historian's experience and culture, including his or her ethnic culture, cogently influences his or her views of the past and present.[26] However, it would be simplistic to argue that there is one Anglo-American view of history and contemporary events or one Black view. Wide differences in experiences and perceptions exist both within and across ethnic groups.

However, those who have experienced a historical event or a social phenomenon, such as racial biogtry or internment, often view the event differently than those who have watched if from a distance. There is no one Anglo-American perspective on the internment as there is no one Japanese-American view of it. However, accounts written by those who were interned, such as Takashima's powerful Child in Prison Camp,[27] often provides insights and perspectives on the internment which cannot be provided by people who were not interned. Individuals who viewed the internment from the outside can also provide us with unique and important perspectives and points of views. Both perspectives should be studied in a sound social studies curriculum.

Only by looking at events, such as the internment, from many different perspectives can we fully understand the complex dimensions of American history and culture. Various ethnic groups within our society are often influenced by events differently and respond to and perceive them differently. One of the goals of ethnic studies should be to change the basic assumptions about what American means and to present students with new ways of viewing and interpreting American history and culture. Any goals which are less ambitious, while important, will not result in the substantial and radical curricular reform which I consider imperative.

Ethnic Studies and Ethnic Conflict

Those of us in ethnic studies write and talk most frequently about the positive effects which cultural diversity can have on American society. However, we rarely speak candidly about the conflict inherent within a society which is made up of diverse ethnic groups with conflicting goals,

ideologies, and strong feelings of ethnocentrism. Some educators are deeply concerned that ethnic studies, by fostering ethnic pride, might lead to extreme ethnic conflict and the Balkanization of American society. In designing ethnic studies programs and experiences, we must give serious and thoughtful consideration to this complex question. Otherwise, this legitimate concern may become a rationalization for inaction and a justification for the status quo.

Whether ethnic studies content and programs contribute to the development of dysfunctional ethnic polarization and social conflict or help to bring about democratic social change depends to some extent on the ways in which ethnic studies programs are conceptualized and taught. Ethnic studies programs which focus exclusively on the sins of Anglo-Americans and the virtues of oppressed minorities are not likely to help students to develop the kinds of skills and attitudes which they need to function successfully within our pluralistic society. Ethnic studies should focus on helping students to develop humanistic attitudes and the skills to engage in reflective social action that will influence public policy. An ethnic studies program that fosters humanism and reflective social action will enable students to participate more effectively in the reformation of our society and in the elimination of ethnic conflict and polarization.

Ethnic Studies: For All Students

The broad view of ethnic studies which I have described in this paper suggests that all students, regardless of their ethnicity, race or social class, should study ethnic studies, which I am defining, in part, as the study of American history and culture from diverse ethnic perspectives.

Studying American history and culture from different ethnic perspectives can help students to broaden their views of American society and to become more aware of cultural and ethnic alternatives. Most Americans are socialized within tight ethnic enclaves where they primarily learn one cultural life style and one way to be human. Consequently, most of our students are ethnically illiterate. The curriculum in most schools is mainly an extension of the home and community culture of Anglo-American students.

The school should present all students with cultural and ethnic alternatives and help them to become more ethnically literate.[28] Minority students should be helped to attain the skills and perceptions needed to function effectively both within their ethnic cultures and the common culture. Anglo-American students must also be helped to function across ethnic cultures and to learn that they have cultural options. We severely limit the potentiality of students when we merely teach them aspects of their own ethnic cultures and reinforce their ethnic group ethnocentrism. Anglo-American students should realize that using Black English is one effective way to communicate, that Native Americans have values, beliefs, and life styles which may be functional for them, and that there are alternative ways of behaving and of viewing the universe which are practiced within the United States that they can embrace. By helping all students to view the world beyond their cultural and ethnic perspectives and to function effectively across cultures, we will enrich them as human beings and enable them to live more productive and fulfilling lives.

NOTES

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